

**LAND AUTHORITY GOVERNING BOARD  
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

**Meeting Date:** March 16, 2005

**Division:** Land Authority

**Bulk Item:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Staff Contact Person:** Mark Rosch

**Agenda Item Wording:** Approval to add the Key West Botanical Garden Addition to the Acquisition List.

**Item Background:** The City of Key West proposes to purchase the Public Service Building property at 5100 College Road on Stock Island from Monroe County for \$4.5 million as an addition to the Key West Botanical Garden. The City proposes to fund this acquisition with a \$3,375,000 grant from the Florida Communities Trust and requests that the Land Authority provide the required \$1,125,000 local match. The Land Authority would need to receive a real property interest (most likely a conservation easement) in order to participate in the transaction.

The project satisfies the Land Authority's statutory requirements by providing public access, public recreation, and some restoration of the natural environment that will benefit wildlife. There is currently over \$1.8 million in unencumbered funds in the Land Authority budget for projects in the Key West Area of Critical State Concern.

The addition of property to the Acquisition List is a preliminary, non-binding step indicating the Board's desire to pursue acquisition. Further Board action is required before entering into a purchase contract.

**Advisory Committee Action:** On February 23, 2005 the Committee voted 4/0 to approve adding this project to the Acquisition List.

**Previous Governing Board Action:** None. Sitting as the BOCC, the Board has accepted the City's \$4.5 million purchase offer for the property.

**Contract/Agreement Changes:** N/A

**Staff Recommendation:** Pleasure of the Board.

**Total Cost:** approximately \$1,125,000

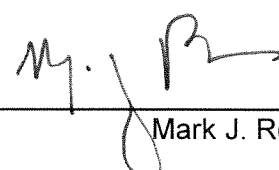
**Budgeted:** Yes ☒ No ☐

**Cost to Land Authority:** approximately \$1,125,000

**Source of Funds:** Land Authority  
(Tourist Impact Tax collected within Key West)

**Approved By:** Attorney ☒ County Land Steward ☐

**Executive Director Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

  
Mark J. Rosch

**Documentation:** Included: ☒

To Follow: ☐

Not Required: ☐

**Disposition:** \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda Item \_\_\_\_\_



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Key West Botanical Gardens Addition is a 6.02 acre site located on Stock Island in Key West, Florida, immediately adjacent to the Key West Botanical Gardens and the Cow Key Channel. The project site is located in a priority investment area, the Florida Keys Area of Critical State Concern. It was selected for funding by the Governing Board of the Florida Communities Trust in October of 2003. The site was originally part of the Key West Botanical Gardens when it was created with a WPA grant in 1936. At the end of World War II this parcel was developed as a military hospital and eventually was conveyed to Monroe County which developed the site as their administration center. Eventually it came to the County's attention that the buildings on the site were contaminated with asbestos and the buildings were abandoned, and subsequently torn down in 2003.

The purpose of this project is to restore this parcel to the Key West Botanical Gardens and manage it as an addition to the Gardens. The site will be re-planted and developed to further environmental education opportunities for residents and visitors to Key West. Grant funding from FCT was used to acquire the Project Site and the management plan was developed to ensure that the Project Site will be developed in accordance with the Grant Award Agreement and in furtherance of the purpose of the grant application.

## **II. PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT**

The following were the purposes for acquiring the project site as stated in the grant application:

- Restore land that was originally part of the Botanical Gardens when it was created with a grant from the Works Progress Administration in 1936
- Preservation and restoration of the only frost-free tropical botanical garden in the continental United States.
- Preservation and restoration of an important "migratory trap", provision of freshwater for migratory birds including many endangered and threatened species
- Provision of resource based recreational activities to residents and visitors to Key West including picnic pavilions, nature trails, wildlife observation, and canoe/kayak landing
- Provision of access and parking to Cow Key Channel
- Provision of trailside facilities for the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail
- Provision of trailside facilities for the Florida Keys Overseas Paddling Trail
- Provision of 30 staffed education programs per year on environmental and historical topics related to the Gardens and the Florida Keys
- Restoration of rare tropical hardwood hammock
- Restoration of habitat for the threatened Stock Island Tree Snail through cooperative agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Removal of impervious surfaces, buildings and parking lots and replacement with greenspace in an urban setting

- Purchase of buildable property and conversion to City owned open space in a Special High Hazard Flood Zone to further the Monroe County Local Mitigation Strategy
- Preservation and restoration of lands in an Area of Critical State Concern
- Education of the public of the value of tropical hardwood hammock/forests in terms of biodiversity and medical discoveries.

The project site will be managed only for the conservation, protection and enhancement of natural resources, and for public outdoor recreation that is compatible with the conservation, protection and enhancement of the site.

Prioritized key management objectives for the site:

- Preservation and restoration of lands in an Area of Critical State Concern
- Provision of migratory bird habitat
- Provision of access and parking to waterways
- Provision of environmental education opportunities

This project furthers the following Conservation Element Objectives and Policies in the City of Key West Comprehensive Plan: CON 6-1.2, 6-1.2.4, 6-1.2.5, 6-1.2.9, 6-1.3.2, 6-1.7.3, 6-1.8.2. This element is furthered because the project will improve water quality through the removal of impervious surfaces; enhance shoreline through the removal of exotic vegetation; protect water bodies through the provision of open space; protect and conserve the Cow Key Channel, an Outstanding Florida Water; removal of undesirable exotic vegetation; and protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat, including the Stock Island Tree Snail which uses the project site as habitat.

The City of Key West's Historic Preservation Element Policy 1A-1.3.6 is furthered through acquisition of an endangered historic site. The project site was originally part of the Key West Botanical Gardens which was created through a WPA grant in 1936. This project will restore this property to the garden and re-plant it. Intergovernmental Relations Element Policy 8-1.1.3 is furthered through inter-agency coordination including natural resource conservation through acquisition.

Recreation and Open Space Element Policies 7-1.1.1 and 7-1.1.9 are furthered by improving the City of Key West's level of service for city parks, by providing parking for water access, and by conservation and recreation through the acquisition of open space. The Traffic Circulation Element's Objective 2-1.4 and Policy 2-1.4.1 are furthered by providing trailside facilities for the Florida Key Overseas Heritage Trail. For the full text of the Comprehensive Plan Objective and Policies furthered by this project, please see Appendix 6.

The Project Site currently has the land use designation of Public Service which is appropriate for passive parks. The City also commits to amend the zoning map to be consistent with the amended future land use designation for the project site.

RESOLUTION NO. 05-082

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA, NOMINATING A 6.02 ACRE PARCEL ON STOCK ISLAND TO THE MONROE COUNTY LAND AUTHORITY FOR PARTIAL FUNDING TOWARD THE PURCHASE OF THE BOTANICAL GARDEN ADDITION; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the Monroe County Land Authority holds funds on behalf of the City of Key West that may be dedicated to the purchase of land;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: That the 6.02 acre parcel on Stock Island is hereby nominated to the Monroe County Land Authority for partial funding in the amount of \$1,125,000.00.

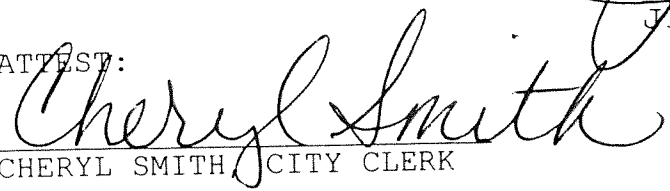
Section 2: That this Resolution shall go into effect immediately upon its passage and adoption and authentication by the signature of the presiding officer and the Clerk of the Commission.

Passed and adopted by the City Commission at a meeting held this 15 day of February, 2005.

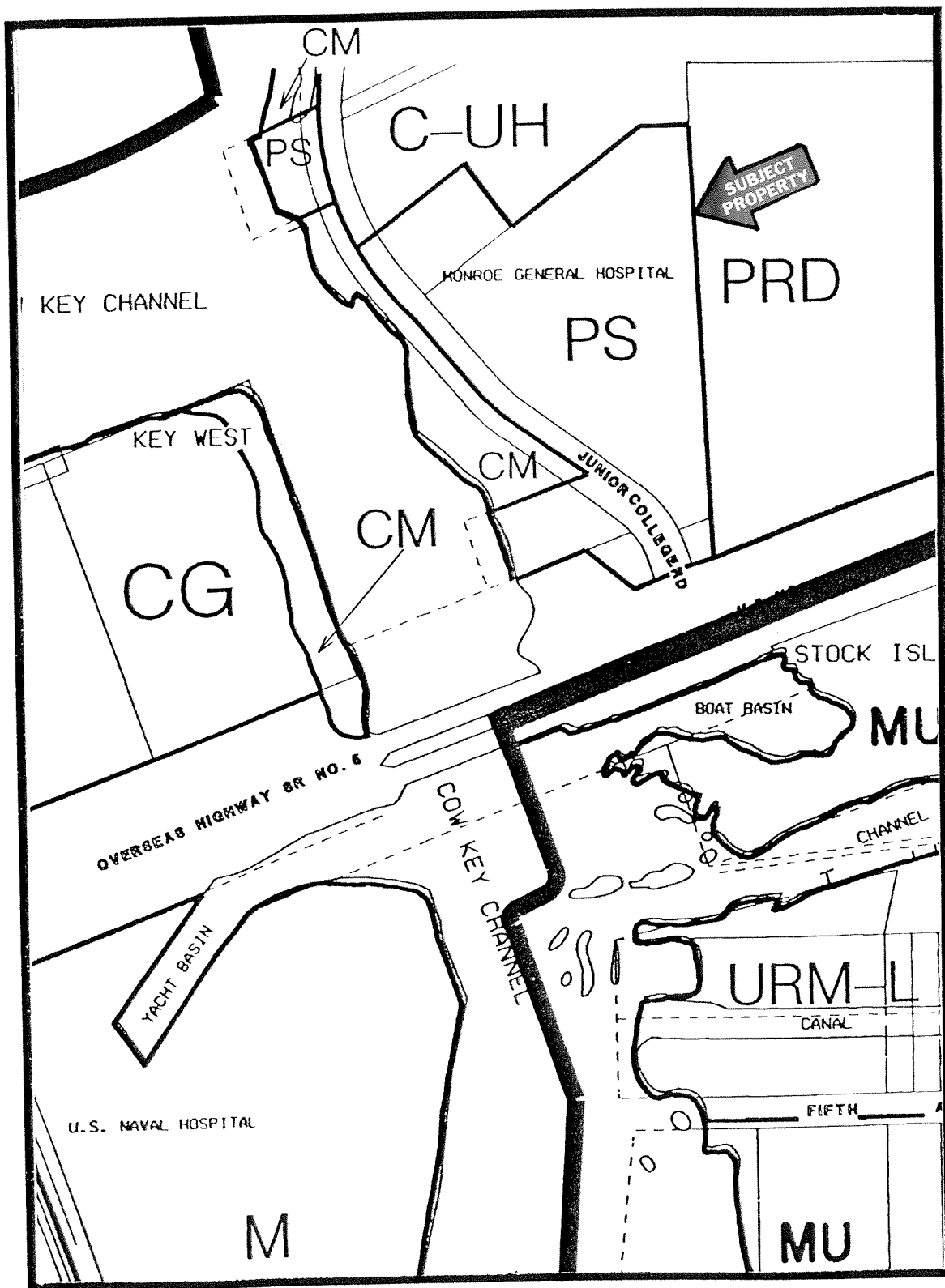
Authenticated by the presiding officer and Clerk of the Commission on February 16, 2005.

Filed with the Clerk February 16, 2005.

ATTEST:

  
CHERYL SMITH, CITY CLERK

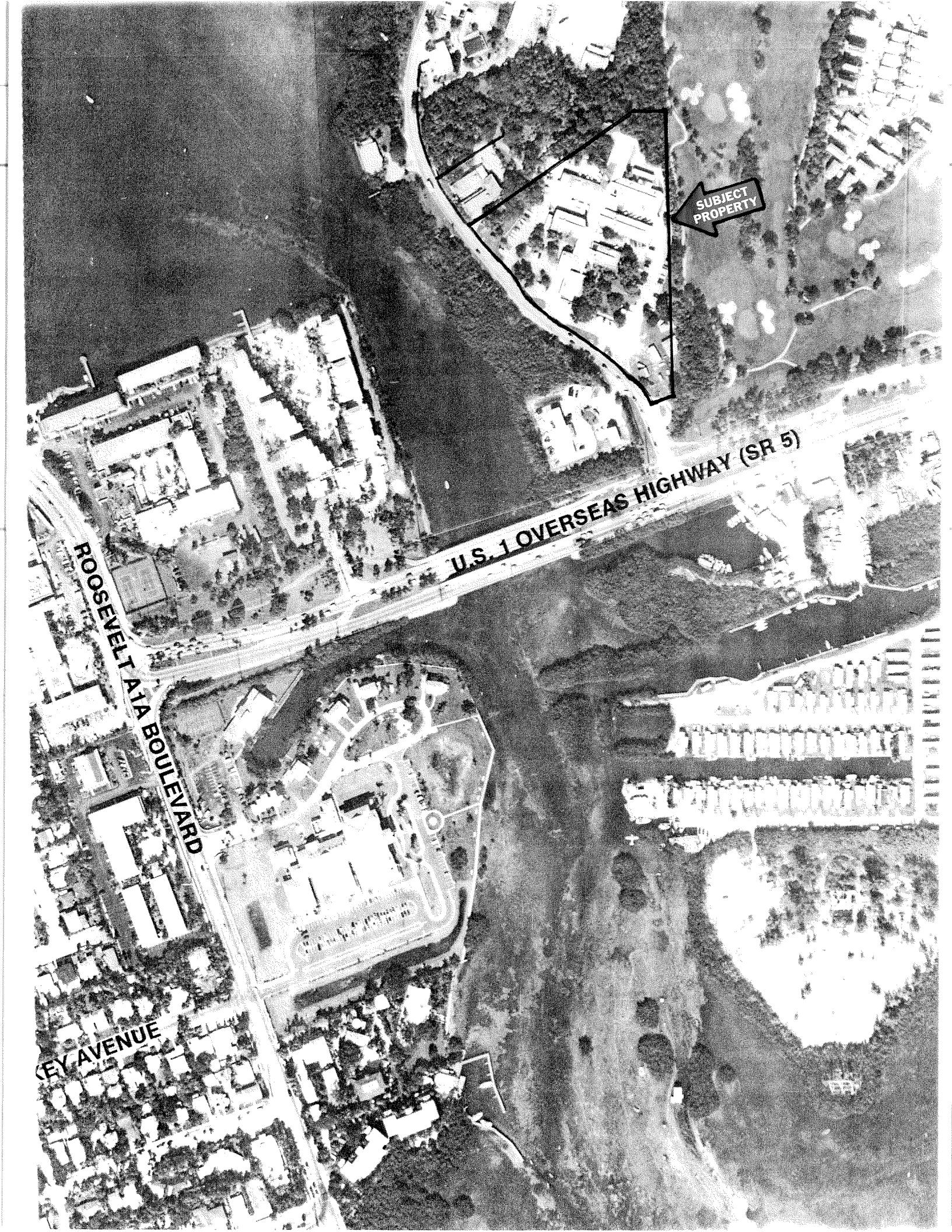
  
JIMMY WEEKLEY, MAYOR



Mile Marker 4.3 Island Stock Island

Property BOCC Public Service Buildings





SUBJECT  
PROPERTY

U.S. 1 OVERSEAS HIGHWAY (SR 5)

ROOSEVELT A1A BOULEVARD

KEY AVENUE